

A Regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on January 2, 2007 beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall. The following members were present.

Joseph Denneen, Chairman
Al DeNapoli, Vice Chairman
Chris Timson, Clerk
Michael Caron (8:30 p.m.)
Catherine Winston

Also present:
Michael Boynton, Town Administrator

Mr. Denneen called the meeting to order.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Michael Amral is seeking the open seat on the Historical Commission. He lives at 33 Beth Road, and has a desire to be part of the Historical commission. He has an interest in Walpole's history. He has written articles regarding the civil war in the newspaper.

MOTION moved by Ms. Winston to appoint Michael Amaral as a full member to the Historical Commission, seconded by Mr. DeNapoli, VOTED 4-0-0

Mr. Denneen discussed the donation from Joanne Ferguson which helped raise \$150 for the Friends of the Council on Aging. Thanked Mrs. Ferguson for her generosity.

Verizon, Public Hearing, Pole Petition, parking lot

MOTION moved by Ms. Winston to open the public hearing for the Verizon pole petition, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

Paul Schneider, attorney for Verizon explained they had been contacted by the Highway Department for the need to cut down some trees in the CBD parking lot. They have asked us to take our wires off the trees. In order to do that they need to install a pole.

Ms. Walker explained that during her site visit she noted that there is a stake that shows the pole location is on town property. Where the X is on the plan submitted by Verizon, is not town property. We need to meet with them on site to find the proper location. I met with Bob LeBlanc today and he wants to make sure it is in the proper location.

MOTION moved by Ms. Winston to close the hearing, seconded by Mr. DeNapoli, VOTED 4-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to approve the petition filed by Verizon for the new pole on the northerly side of the Town Parking Area off Glenwood Ave, approximately 300 feet north of the intersection with Glenwood Ave, with conditions set forth by Town Engineer, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

7:40 p.m. School Committee, FY08 Budget

Michael Ryan, School Committee, reported that the Committee voted unanimously to petition the Board of Selectmen for an override for the needs for the schools. Mr. Ryan discussed the timing should the Board support an override question. Mr. Ryan pointed out that we are at a critical point in education in Walpole. There are reductions in state aide and the inadequacy of prop 2 ½ does not provide enough funding. Insurance and benefits are a problem in our budget. We have asked that the Board of Selectmen let the people of Walpole decide what level of education they want in town.

Discussed Goals

Mr. Ryan requested an override of \$2,650.00 the school budget. The amount requested would include sufficient new revenue for the schools to fund FY07 level of services

(estimated to require an additional \$1,900,000) a portion of critical unmet needs (requiring an additional \$1,250,000) as well as funding to relieve parents of the burden of transportation and parking fees. We understand there are benefits and insurance costs associated with 27 new full time employees and that number is not included in the \$2.65 million

In FY08, the schools will need \$1.9 million to maintain level service. If we do not get an override based upon the current budget figures there would be a layoff of 20 staff. We understand there has been significant discussion on our teachers contract. At the end of next year the current contract salaries, would bring us up to a lower level than 16 surrounding towns mid point.

We are trying to address critical unmet needs. Need \$1.25 million to fund critical unmet needs. Including 27 new or restored positions. We will take a vote on Monday night to make the list public. There are addendums to your handout.

The total new FY08 revenue needed is \$3.65 million consisting of a projected \$1 million from prop 2 ½.

I would like to generate dialogue and request a special election for an override. If we wait until June, we will be notifying teachers of layoffs. We would hope to be successful and put us into a better position as we go to Town meeting.

Mr. DeNapoli noted that for a lot of those who have been involved over the years, this is not surprising that the town and schools are lacking funds to do what needs to be done. There are a lot of numbers to digest here, he would like time. He felt that we are looking at override discussions, looking at Mr. Boynton to put together some numbers as to what this would mean to our municipal budget and what needs to be funded.

Mr. Boynton stated that there is roughly a need for \$325,000 just from what I have seen from their request for new positions in order to cover, health insurance, there are other factors that I would need to meet with finance team to discuss. We have been cutting, trimming and living with available revenue. At that time there were several things that were cut from the municipal budget and some may be restored some may not be restored. I have asked Department heads to take a look. I have a mission between now and February 5 to present a balanced budget. Today, the deficit number is 1.278 million. Where does the Board want to go do we are look at building in Prison Mitigation into the override? We under fund snow and ice. One storm takes away a 1/3 of the budget. I am not looking to add costs but we continue to have needs.

Mr. DeNapoli questioned what the time frame would be need for the Town Clerk to set up a special election.

Mr. Boynton stated that it is not something you do rapidly. The question is very specific. Believes he needs 35 days. It is the Selectmen that call for the election and set the date.

Mr. DeNapoli noted that the Board knew the schools were coming in. There is no mystery. We can either get new revenues or have cuts. On the revenue side, without new revenues, there would be a shortfall. He would like to see the numbers from Mr. Boynton as to what would be some of the necessary municipal additions he would like to see and what the figure is and Mr. DeNapoli would like a Public forum meeting so other Boards, Departments, and Citizens can come in and speak to the Selectmen, January 23 then take a vote after we hear from everyone.

Ms. Winston likes his suggestion about a meeting. I will not support a special election. We would spend \$10,000 on an election. We have done this before and yes you have to send out notices. I think it is unfair to throw away \$10,000 without a for sure outcome.

Mr. Timson stated it would be helpful if he had some information as to what the impact of this override would be, per person per thousand on individual tax payers. I like Mr. DeNapoli's idea to get input from the public. It looks like the solution that we need for the next Fiscal year.

Mr. Denneen explained that the people that would be voting on this issue, they need to know where the money is going. Mr. Boynton goes through every single line item on the municipal side. It is a good way to show the public what you need.

Mike Ryan, state that the School Committee expects to take a vote on Monday night so we could send over a spreadsheet with line item information.

Mr. Boynton will check with community television and that will help dictate where to have this discussion.

Mr. DeNapoli stated, going back to the simple analysis, you have done your guessing as to what revenue is looking like. One revenue he would like to look at is Trash fees. Have Robin do a brief what trash fee would generate.

Mr. Denneen questioned whether this is the right time to be discussing that issue.

Mr. DeNapoli is looking for a revenue range. Just so we know that here might be an alternate revenue source. It can be in the form of a memo.

Smart Growth Grant

Mr. Boynton has asked that this grant include the RT1A corridor. It is a joint process that is involved with both communities Norfolk and Walpole. The grant is to be conducted by MAPC, pending the approval of this Board. They will conduct 2 public forums as to what to do with this site as well as RT 1A. The public input is critical. It is important of have input from the residents from the Town . There is no cost to the Town.

Ms. Winston questioned if this even meets the criteria for what the grant is for. It is not downtown, a village or Brownfields.

Mr. Caron arrived at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Boynton noted there is no blueprint to develop the site. He does not know if there is going to be a bike path or walking trail. Norfolk may have different interests in this, but he likes the fact that we are together.

There was discussion regarding the parcel in Walpole and the fact that Senator Timilty will not sponsor legislation to Department of Correction to turn the property over to the town. It was noted that they may look at moving that parcel into the hands of conservation to preserve it as open space. The grant work is not costing the town any money and it is a benefit of having a governmental group look at the other sections of RT1A. Several Board members felt it was reasonable to support this.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to support this contract and authorize the chairman to execute on behalf of the town, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-1-0 (Ms. Winston opposed)

8:30 OPEN FORUM

Fiona Murphy spoke regarding the override request from the School Committee. I hope it is received keeping in mind the dire circumstances presented, this should not be voted by the Selectmen but by the voters.

Melcolm Slye, resident for 50 years asked, what are the impacts that each of the overrides take, I have seen my taxes go up over \$1,000 last 10 years. State has mandated an increase in town property, increase in our tax rate, with all these expensive properties in the town, is that not enough to take care of the needs of the town? Looking over the information, I am not anti-schools or teachers. I wonder at some of this override. My children walked to school. Did anyone every hear about car pooling? Talking about class size, I never went to school with 25 kids in a classroom, we had 30-35, large rooms, sometimes 50 or more, I do not see that as beneficial to the school department as it is to the teachers.

Taxes I have mentioned to you, why ¼ of our population , 7,000 seniors, fixed income, subject to these overrides. 66% goes into the school department I remember when it was 50% or below, it seems like a lot of money. I think there is a problem that can be solved. Freeze taxes on those 65 to 70, we would focus on those that are interested on the overrides. When my children were in school needs were different, looking for smaller class sizes.

Kate Hinden, a 7 year resident in Walpole and reluctantly asked for an override. We are raising 5 children. The Town needs to attract and maintain good teachers in the town. Three of my four children are in classrooms over guidelines. No one wants higher taxes, but we deserve the ability to vote on the issue.

Joanne Mulligan, spoke and echoed Hinden's comments. It is critical to have information given to everyone in the town. How much is it going to be? That could be a critical point of information. I would like to have the chance to vote.

Jimmy Taylor, every year the school department comes up with an override, to find out where this money is going. Nothing in this town is for the seniors, only for the schools. Every year they cry about money, the Seniors get nothing. They should be ordered by the State to do an audit. No trash fees, leave things alone.

1-5 Gift Acceptance

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to accept the gift in the amount of \$400 for the police safety program, seconded by Mr. Caron, VOTED 5-0-0

Town Administrators Update

FY08 Route 1A North and South. \$1.4 million in funding for Washington Street. The DPW Director will prepare the forms as part of the TIP process. There will be 1.4 million available for construction.

Sex offender legislation update will be on January 16, 2007 at 10AM in the town hall.

There will be a meeting on January 11, 2007 regarding a potential development off Industrial Road.

Hazard planning mitigation grant award. – This is a multi town project. You have to conduct a program to be eligible for these funds going forward. By having this complete it will make us more competitive.

The Town Hall will be closed on January 15, 2007 for Martin Luther King day.

Old Business

Mr. Boynton does not think anyone should be thinking that we are talking about a \$2.65 million dollar override. These numbers have a flexibility. The Town is very early into this process of budgets today. We have nothing in guaranteed revenue. Critical State Aide numbers, are far away from being finalized.

AD I did want to underscore that Bayer health care did in bringing their science program to Elm St. I hope that continues.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to adjourn at 9 p.m. seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Timson, Clerk

